

BRIEFS

NEVER TOO LATE TO FIND JESUS

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP) — Lou Warshaw prayed for 24 years that her husband George would accept Christ as his Lord and Savior. She refused to give up hope, and God answered her prayers when George was baptized at age 101. "The devil kept telling me it wouldn't happen," Lou said, admitting to times when her faith was tested, "but I kept believing God would let it happen. I think I'm still on cloud nine."

PASTOR'S GRAND- DAUGHTER SHOT

ROSEBURG, Ore. (BP) — The granddaughter of Oregon Southern Baptist pastor Howard A. Johnson was shot in the leg during last week's mass shooting at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Or. "I was able to talk to her. She is the only child of my number three son who died at age 31, and she was three at the time. She's now 19 and attending college, and you'd think she'd be at a safe environment, but that didn't happen."

OCTOBER IS PASTOR APPRECIATION MONTH

"When a pastor is lifted up, the entire church is lifted with encouragement. Students of the Great Awakenings have discovered that one common factor to every move of God among His people is bold and courageous preaching. Such preaching comes only from pastors who are prayed for and encouraged." So says Michael Lewis, executive director of pastoral care and development for the North American Mission Board. Read more on page two.

Power of the small

Conference equips small church pastors, leaders

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Hundreds of pastors and other leaders from self-identified small congregations of the Mississippi Baptist Convention gathered at First Church, Jackson, on Sept. 24, for the first Celebrating the Small Strong Congregation event sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB).

Plenary speaker and facilitator for the meeting was Chuck Lawless, professor of evangelism and missions, dean of graduate studies, and vice-president for graduate studies and ministry centers at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

The day-long event consisted of group sessions with Lawless as well as breakout "table talk" sessions for smaller groups.

"Dr. Lawless truly connected well with the participants as he effectively conveyed God's truths as he dealt with each topic," said Roger Orman, team leader for the MBCB Discipleship Development Center/Sunday School and a small groups specialist. "The networking around the tables was rich as church leaders got to



TABLE TALK — Pastors and other leaders from smaller Mississippi Baptist congregations share thoughts and ideas unique to their ministries during the Celebrate the Small Strong Congregation event on Sept. 24 at First Church, Jackson. (Photo by Tony Martin)

know one another, exchanged ideas and concerns, and addressed the issues presented."

Topics covered during the day included The Power of Small; Guarding the Heart for

Effective Ministry; Outside the Walls; and Groups Matter.

Lawless said his service in smaller churches has had a powerful personal impact. "The church in which I became

a believer ran about 120," Lawless said. "The first church I pastored had 19 in attendance my first Sunday, but those 120

see SMALL on p. 9



STUDYING HARD — Participants in the Hands UP Outreach ministry of Rankin Association in Brandon work with volunteer tutors to prepare for their upcoming GED high school equivalency tests. The ministry was recently recognized with a national award from the Christian Women's Job Corps of the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention in Birmingham and a \$2,500 grant from the WMU Foundation. (Special photo)

Rankin ministry receives national award and grant

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

The Hands UP Outreach ministry of Rankin Association in Brandon has received the 2015 Christian Women's Job Corps national site award and a \$2,500 grant from the Woman's Missionary Union Foundation in Birmingham.

The Rankin Association site will use the grant to provide access to a GED high school equivalency training program, allowing students to study for the GED test and increase their scores.

Hands UP participants pass their GED tests around 75% of the time, program sponsors say, and the grant will make it possible

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Season of the fanatic

Football has descended upon us once again, and we are once again reminded that "fan" really is shorthand for "fanatic."

Stadiums across the land are brimming every weekend. Faithful followers of even the worst teams can share in the hope — no matter how unrealistic it may be (see "fan" above) — that this will be their championship year.

Incalculable gallons of ink will be spread across many tons of newsprint in order for sports writers to pontificate about each game, both before and after the game. Millions of megawatts of electricity will carry thousands of games and expert analysis over the airwaves of this country in

co-opted satellites and fiber optics so the games can be seen and heard around the world both on television and the Internet, more often than not in real time.

Statistics are pored over, and bold predictions are made. Price is no object. Real fans sign up for special broadcast packages and purchase expensive, high-definition televisions that allow them to screen more than one game at a time. An untold number of high-end digital video recorders will be set for game time.

Oh, the agony of missing even one game — even one play of one game!

The latest innovation for fanatics comes with names like DraftKings and FanDuel, gambling web sites masquerading as fantasy football "games of skill," as one of the web sites describes it, but are gambling web sites nonetheless. More on that craze in a future column.

The lifestyle of the fan/fanatic must be an interesting subject for sociologists and other observers of human nature. While important national issues remain unresolved and wars swirl all around us, we turn our attention to fleeting games of competition the outcome of which will soon be forgotten (especially when the new season rolls around next year).

Would that we possessed the same unbridled passion for the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20).

Sadly, many of the same folks who arose only the day before at 5 a.m., dressed in school colors, drove for several hours across the state, attended the game, partied afterward, and arrived home after midnight, cannot drag themselves out of bed and arrive at church with the same enthusiasm they had for the ball game.

Many of the same folks who focus so much time, energy, and money on ball games can't seem to muster any of those attributes when it comes to sharing the Gospel or knocking on doors and inviting people to worship with them.

Can we even imagine what it would be like to fill a stadium every weekend with 100,000 screaming, adoring fans of Jesus Christ? Can we even imagine what it would be like to fill hundreds of those stadiums every weekend for worship and praise, as we do for our favorite football teams?

Can we even imagine what it would be like for all those people in all those stadiums to exit on fire for witnessing and discipling, and with great anticipation and planning for the next weekend's gathering? Can we even imagine having the same excitement about feeding the hungry, visiting prisoners, and taking care of the sick, all in the name of Jesus?

If only lost people could see us working for Jesus in the same way we support our favorite teams. If only lost people could see that Christians have their priorities in order, that the rescue of one soul from darkness and death is infinitely more important than the most important ball game there could ever be.

What could we accomplish? Just listen to the roar from the stadiums next weekend, and you'll know.

Remember your pastor

Your pastor needs encouragement. The North American Mission Board is encouraging you and your church leadership to pick a day this fall to lift your pastor through expressions of loving appreciation.

Why should you lift your pastor? Just consider the greatest pastor who ever lived, the Apostle Paul, who experienced a need for encouragement. In 2 Corinthians 7:5-6, Paul transparently shared, "For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were fears. Nevertheless God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus" (NKJV).

If Paul needed encouragement, how much more does your pastor? Notice that in the midst of Paul's struggles with personal insecurities and ministry conflict, God comforted him through the encouragement of Titus. Through the Lift Pastor Appreciation emphasis of the North American Mission Board, you can extend to your pastor and his family a "Titus Touch" of encouragement.

King Midas is popularly remembered in Greek mythology for his ability to turn everything he touched into gold. This became known as the Golden Touch or the Midas Touch. The Titus Touch is the golden touch of encouragement, which is given by a church through lifting their pastor in appreciation.

Will you join God in His gracious work of "comforting" your pastor and his family? Will you lift your pastor and extend the Titus Touch to him?

The struggles of pastoral ministry are real. They have been documented anew in a recent study LifeWay Research completed in partnership with the North American Mission Board. The study surveyed 1,500 pastors. Among the results:

- 84% of pastors report they are on call 24 hours a day.
- 80% of pastors expect conflict in their church.
- 54% find the role of pastor frequently overwhelming.
- 53% often are concerned about their family's financial security.
- 48% often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle.



Guest opinion
with Michael Lewis

■ 21% say their church has unrealistic expectations of them.

In the course of 25 years serving as pastor for churches of a variety of sizes and settings, there have been special times when church leaders have taken five minutes of a worship gathering to recognize our family, which brought great encouragement to me.

One year the chairman of the personnel committee asked our family to join him before the congregation and acknowledged the love of the church for our family and appreciation for my leadership as a pastor. The church gave us a gift card to enjoy a much-needed time of rest.

This simple act brought such affirmation and encouragement not only to me but also to my entire family.

When a pastor is lifted up, the entire church is lifted with encouragement. Students of the Great Awakenings have discovered that one common factor to every move of God among His people is bold and courageous preaching. Such preaching comes only from pastors who are prayed for and encouraged.

Could it be by simple acts of lifting your pastor and his family that God may begin the next Great Awakening in your church and community?

Resources and prayerful suggestions to make Lift Pastor Appreciation special for you and your pastor can be found at sendnetwork.com/pastors-appreciation.

If you lift your pastor, the North American Mission Board may lift your church with the gift of a Shane and Shane concert. To enter a contest to host a concert, simply share how you lift your pastor and encourage others to do the same. Post photos on

see LEWIS on p. 8

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NEW MINISTRY — David Melber (center) is congratulated by North American Mission Board president Kevin Ezell (left) after Melber was named senior vice president of the new Send Relief compassion ministry during the Oct. 7 trustee meeting in Salt Lake City. Joining Melber and Ezell was Melber's wife Tera. (BP photo courtesy of NAMB)

NAMB approves new ministry, \$4 million for IMB missionaries

SALT LAKE CITY (BP and local reports) — Trustees of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) have approved the establishment of Send Relief, a new compassion ministry that will offer Southern Baptists opportunities to meet physical needs and serve underprivileged communities.

NAMB President Kevin Ezell noted shortly after trustees closed their meeting Oct. 7 in Salt Lake City, "Imagine 40,000 Southern Baptist churches engaged to meet needs in their communities and across North America. Send Relief will give churches hands-on opportunities to alleviate suffering and transform lives."

Send Relief will launch in 2016 and include compassion ministries to combat hunger, poverty, serve children through foster care and adoption, combat human trafficking, minister to migrants through international learning centers and meet inner-city needs with construction and medical teams.

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- combat hunger and poverty.
- serve children through foster care and adoption.

"Send Relief is going to be an ideal way for us as Southern Baptists to meet a real need — not only for the physical side but to proclaim the Gospel, see people come to Christ, and help be part of the church planting effort."

David Melber
vice president of Send Relief

- combat human trafficking.
- minister to migrants through international learning centers.
- meet inner-city needs with construction and medical teams.

NAMB trustees approved David Melber as vice president of Send Relief. Melber has led Crossings Ministries camp outreach in Kentucky since 2003.

"Send Relief is going to be an ideal way for us as Southern Baptists to meet a real need — not only for the physical side but to proclaim the Gospel, see people come to Christ, and help be part of the church planting effort," Melber said.

NAMB's disaster relief team will be part of Send Relief and continue to have its own director. NAMB will continue to serve as coordinator of national disaster re-

lief responses from its headquarters in Alpharetta, Ga.

Trustees also approved a four million dollar budget reduction for the 2015-16 fiscal year, so NAMB can send funds to assist International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries. Ezell requested the action in response to the IMB's announced reduction in personnel of up to 15% in order to address ongoing revenue shortfalls.

"This is a Kingdom vote," said NAMB trustee chairman Chuck Herring, senior pastor of Collierville First Church near Memphis and a former Mississippi pastor, after trustees unanimously passed the resolution.

Next, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee must approve the proposed assistance before NAMB can transfer funds to IMB, which is headquartered in Richmond, Va.

USCIRF reauthorized by Congress, special advisor named to post

WASHINGTON (BP) — Oppressed Christians and other religious adherents around the world stand to benefit from recent actions by the United States government.

The U.S. House of Representatives approved reauthorization of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in a voice vote Oct. 6. The Senate passed the same legislation without opposition Sept. 30.

The measure, awaiting U.S. President Barack Obama's signature, will extend the authority of a bipartisan panel that serves as a watchdog on global religious liberty conditions.

Congressional action to renew USCIRF's mission came shortly after Obama selected one of the commission's own staffers as the first special advisor for religious minorities in the Near East and South/Central Asia.

David Saperstein, the U.S. ambassador at large for international religious freedom, announced the appointment of Knox Thames to the new post Sept. 16. Thames, formerly USCIRF's director of policy and research, began work in the State Department's Office of International Religious Freedom Sept. 28.

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville, applauded both developments.

He expressed gratitude Congress "acted in the best interest of Americans and millions of other people around the world by reauthorizing [USCIRF], which plays a crucial role in standing up for soul freedom against tyranny around the world."

In written comments for Baptist Press, Moore described Thames as "an excellent choice to serve as a special advisor for religious minorities in some of the most oppressive regions in the world. His stalwart commitment to religious freedom and years of experience both on the field and in crafting policy will help play a crucial part in defending religious freedom in countries where there might otherwise be little or no advocacy for it."

The road to congressional reauthorization of USCIRF proved rocky. The international religious freedom community supported bills sponsored by Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fl.) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) that would not only have renewed USCIRF's authority but strengthened it.

The Rubio and Smith measures included provisions calling for expanding the designation of severe violators of religious liberty to include non-government,

terrorist groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in the Near East and Boko Haram in Nigeria.

Congress finally approved a compromise but one that accomplished its main purpose of keeping USCIRF's doors open. It appeared in late September that the commission might have to shut down, at least temporarily.

Its authorization was to end Sept. 30, but Congress managed to extend USCIRF's life by including it in a continuing resolution to keep the federal government operating. A continuing resolution is a short-term funding measure.

The newly approved reauthorization is for four years, a fact Rubio highlighted after the Senate vote. The four-year authorization will enable USCIRF "to focus, without distraction, on their critical mandate at precisely the time it's most needed," he said in a written statement.

"Attacks on houses of worship, imprisonment, and even death are daily realities for people of faith around the world," Rubio said. "This is especially true for religious minorities in the Middle East who are facing a genocidal onslaught."

USCIRF "has been a steadfast champion of this 'first freedom' and a reliable voice for the oppressed and marginalized," he said.

Moore commended Rubio's efforts, saying USCIRF reauthorization "would never have been possible if not for the longstanding and valiant leadership" of the senator.

The post now filled by Thames remained vacant for 13 months after the Near East and South Central Asia Religious Freedom Act became law in August 2014. Moore joined a diverse coalition of religious liberty advocates in an April letter urging Obama to make an appointment for the position.

Thames' responsibilities as special advisor include monitoring religious freedom conditions in the Near East — also known as the Middle East — and South/Central Asia, and recommending responses by Washington to violations of religious rights.

Repression or persecution of religious adherents in recent years has continued or increased in such countries as Iraq, Syria, Iran, Pakistan, Egypt, and Afghanistan. Among the religious communities victimized by ISIS and other Islamic extremists in particular are Christians, Yazidis in Iraq, Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan, and Baha'is in Iran.

The existence of entire religious movements is threatened in some countries, such as Iraq and Egypt.

Kim Davis became national news out of Kentucky when she refused to give marriage licenses to same sex couples. The fallout was that she would stand before a federal judge, be sent to jail where she spent six days, and when released face the wrath of any and everyone who wanted to call her a name and criticize her past or her present or her faith or her future. According to Davis, she was called Hitler and hypocrite and told that God does not love people like her.

One reporter who interviewed her days after she was released from jail asked, "Why do you feel your moral conscience is more important than someone else's happiness?" That is a fair question and a legitimate question, but I must add a question built on the wrong premise. For decades now the culture, especially here in America, has been built on the premise that the chief goal of man is to be happy. The thought is that God made us to be happy and He is only happy when we're happy.

Back in the '60s the sexual revolution and freedom of sexual expression were all the headlines and, coupled with an incredible, insatiable appetite for drugs that would lift you up or zone you out, had swept the country. Everybody wanted to feel good and just be happy. The capsule statement of those days was, "If it feels good, do it," and if it feels good and you do it, you will ultimately be happy.

The problem was — and is — that's not true. Simply because you break down walls and barriers and live in a world where all restraints have been thrown off in every area of life does not in any way assure happiness and certainly does not bring out ultimate purpose in life. Here's



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

The Great Question

the great question: Is the ultimate goal of the human being to be happy? I realize that in our founding documents you will find, "...and the pursuit of happiness..." as one of the core ideas. The problem is that happiness is an elusive idea and as much as you may chase after it, the more distant it may become.

Happiness is not an acquired commodity, but nearly always a byproduct of right pursuits and right relationships. You can't buy it or simply acquire it, but you will often find it waiting in the wings as you go after something right or good or godly in your life. If your chief question and goal in life is, "How can I be happy?" you may never attain it. Do you think Jesus was happy? I think the answer is a resounding yes. His goal and pursuit in life was always to do the Father's will, not just to find the happy zone in life.

The results of a study that was done on happiness were recently released,

and the findings were fascinating. One of the things the study pointed out was that the happiest period in most people's lives is from ages 15-24. Two of the reasons given were that the burdens of responsibility are not as great as in later periods of life, and that in large measure as these young people were transitioning to adults they still had solid support from parents.

The study reported that happiness begins to diminish after age 24, attributed to the facts that most people were by that age married or having children or incurring increasing debt or facing the payoff of the student loans or purchasing a home, and all the burdens of being grown up kind of comes crashing in on folks.

The study also observed that all the joy and the happiness stuff of the 15-24 age period stay pretty much in the distant future until returning at about age 80. At that point, the study said, people become more relaxed and probably

more reasoned in their approach to life, and resolve to enjoy what life they have. Well, the other piece of that is that the average person does not live to be 80. The average lifespan is in the 70s range and so I guess if you know the Lord and you go on to be with Him, real eternal happiness becomes a part of daily life.

I got to thinking about that study and what the researchers had found. I personally didn't remember the 15-24 age period of life as being incredibly happy, not out of the norm at least. I do remember some things that I did, and probably what I was at 15 or 16 and 17 that I would hate to think I was going back there, but somewhere down the pathway of life I discovered that God only gives us one day at a time. I've often thought, what would we do if He handed us two days at one time? That would be a mess. Just a day at a time, and Scripture says, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." (Ps. 118:24).

Whether you are age 20 or 120, the only opportunity you have to be blessed or to be a blessing is the one day that is before you right now. You cannot go back and do anything about the 15-24 age period or all the good things that have happened or didn't happen through the decades of your life, but today — today — you have the privilege and I think the responsibility of not only wanting to be happy but being a blessing to others and doing something that will honor the Lord, bless the folks around you, and just keep your eyes open because you may find that you run slap dab into a happiness moment.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News



Tommy King, president of **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY**, has been elected chairman of the Consortium for Global Education (CGE), a nonprofit organization of accredited American private colleges and universities committed to global development in education. King's election occurred during CGE's annual meeting on the campus of Charleston Southern University in South Carolina from September 16-18. As chairman, King will provide guidance to staff and the board of directors in furthering CGE goals and initiatives. King was elected to the CGE executive committee in September 2013.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Pleasant Hill Church, Tiptah Co.:** Revival, Oct. 18 - 21; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; potluck meal Wednesday after service; Charles Smith, speaker; James Harrison, music.

► **First Church, Durant:** Homecoming, Oct. 18; Sunday School, high attendance in Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal and afternoon worship; Matt Brady, speaker; O. Lyn Nations, pastor.

► **Kilmichael Church, Kilmichael:** Homecoming, Oct. 18; registration, 9 a.m.; program, 10 a.m., followed by potluck lunch and fellowship.

► **Strengthford First Church, Laurel:** Homecoming, Oct. 18; services, 10 a.m., followed by lunch; Dwight Smith, speaker; In Faith, music; Bobby Boutwell, pastor.

► **Main St. Church, Hattiesburg:** Homecoming, Oct. 18; service, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds; Jim Futral, speaker.

► **Southside Church, Vicksburg:** Revival, Oct. 18 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Fri., 7 p.m.; Harvey Reeves, speaker.

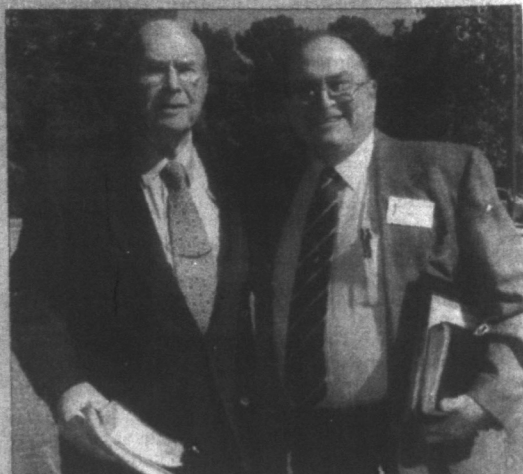
► **Mt. Vernon Church, Newton County:** Homecoming, Oct. 18, 11 a.m., followed by potluck lunch and cemetery association meeting; William Boulton, speaker; Mike Rasberry, pastor.

► **Pearlhaven Church, Brookhaven:** 110th anniversary homecoming, Oct. 18; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Lonnie Case, speaker.

► **Macadonia Church, Lee County:** Revival, Oct. 19 - 20; Jerry Welch, speaker; Dexter Griggs, music; Terry Faulkner, pastor.

► **Blythe Creek Church, Choctaw County:** Homecoming, Oct. 18; special music, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch; Mike Fondren, pastor; Sandra Williams, music director.

► **Bentonia Church, Yazoo Association:** Homecoming, Oct. 18; music with the Revelation Quartet, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Matt Martin, speaker; D. J. Speckner, pastor.



VICTORY CHURCH, BASSFIELD, held its 130th anniversary Sept. 13. Shown are guest speaker Gerald Aultman and George Berger.

► **First Church, Clara:** One-day revival, Oct. 18; service, 10:30 a.m., followed by catered meal and 6:30 p.m.; Gary M. Bowlin, speaker; Kevin Moody, music; Richard Bradley, pastor.

► **Chunky Church, Chunky:** Homecoming, Oct. 18; service, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch.

► **Galilee Church, Rockport:** Homecoming, Oct. 18, 10 a.m., followed by lunch and cemetery decoration; Chuck Ashley, speaker; Servants Heart, Andy Phillips, music.

Billy Graham exhibit to open in North Carolina

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)—The North Carolina Museum of History will open a special exhibit to honor the life of Billy Graham on Nov. 6, the day before the famed evangelist's 97th birthday.

The exhibit will include memorabilia, displays, and multimedia documenting his early days as the son of a dairy farmer, his family life, his friendships with dignitaries, and his leadership through national and international crises like 9/11.

The 5,000-square-foot privately-funded exhibit entitled, North Carolina's Favorite Son: Billy Graham and His Remarkable Journey of Faith, will be at the museum in Raleigh, the state capital, through July 2016.

Graham was voted one of the Ten Most Admired Men in the World in a Gallup poll last year for an unparalleled 58th time. He was presented with the title, North Carolina's Favorite Son, when North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory visited the evangelist in his Montreat home in 2013.

The state's Senate and House of Representatives each passed subsequent resolutions to officially declare the distinction as well as to memorialize Graham's late wife, Ruth Bell Graham.

After the Favorite Son designation became official, it became a concern among some state leaders that there was little in the way of public recognition for Graham, so a group went before museum directors and petitioned for a display to honor their special native.

"They realized there was not very much reflection of our state's faith element, and that a display about the life of Billy Graham would satisfy much of that," said David Bruce, assistant to Billy Graham. "There are definitely reflections of notable people like politicians [at the museum], but this adds a missing and very important piece."

It seemed appropriate to honor Graham while he is still living, Bruce said, "and now, anyone who visits the North Carolina Museum of History will have a chance to see the influence this man from our state has had worldwide."

The Graham exhibit ultimately is not about drawing attention to the famous preacher, but to make the name of Jesus more famous, Bruce added. "Any great honor Billy Graham receives points to his message, his integrity, and his faithfulness. It's really a testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Other than the Billy Graham Library, an exhibit like this has never been done, said Tom Phillips, vice president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), which has developed the exhibit.

"A lot of people go to an historic museum to look at the whole picture of a state's history. In doing so, North Carolina Museum of History visitors will discover the spiritual history of our state through the lives of Billy and Ruth Graham," said Phillips, who also serves as executive director of the Graham library in Charlotte.

Each year an estimated 80,000 eighth-graders from across the state visit the museum. Thousands travel to Raleigh to visit various historical sites and important landmarks, including large numbers of students. The museum counted 421,184 total visitors in its most recent fiscal year.

Phillips is counting on the exhibit to inspire the next generation of North Carolinians.

The legislature voted for Billy Graham to be the state's Favorite Son. Billy Graham is an evangelist. His whole life is the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ for commitment. So, to tell his story, there is no way around the reality of Gospel proclamation and invitation.

"I believe this exhibit will encourage all young people that God has a plan for their lives, and that He can call them to do great things, like He did with Billy Graham. This is a wonderful opportunity to share the spiritual heritage of one man and his wife... and how God can work through one couple totally committed to Him."

"My prayer is that [museum visitors] will walk away with the understanding that they don't have to be pastors, missionaries, or world-famous evangelists to fulfill God's call. They can do that wherever God places them."

According to BGEA, the North Carolina's Favorite Son exhibit will include:

- The evangelist's early life and ministry along with Billy and Ruth Graham's family times



EXHIBIT PLANNED — The family life of Billy Graham, shown here with sons Ned (left) and Franklin, will be part of an exhibit on the evangelist's life and ministry slated to open Nov. 6 at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. (BP photo courtesy of Billy Graham Evangelistic Association)

at their home in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Also included will be fun facts about his favorite things in North Carolina.

- A look at each of Graham's 12 North Carolina crusades and other evangelistic campaigns such as Los Angeles in 1949; London, 1954; New York City, 1957; and South Africa, 1973.

The exhibit also will showcase large murals depicting the scope of attendance at crusades held around the world.

- Never-before-exhibited items such as the American flag flown over the U.S. Capitol in honor of Ruth and Billy Graham's 50th wedding anniversary; the miniature dictation machine Graham used in sermon preparation; the tuxedo Graham wore when he was knighted at the British Embassy in 2001.

There is already talk about taking the display on the road to regional museums, Phillips said. Some denominational offices and seminaries also have expressed interest in hosting some or all of the display in the future.

The website for the exhibit is billygraham.org/landing_pages/northcarolinamuseumexhibit.

McCrory, the governor, visited the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte Oct. 2 to sign a bill passed by the state Senate and House to pave the way for a Billy Graham statue in the National Statuary Hall in Congress.

Congressional guidelines require that a person's statue for Statuary Hall only be installed posthumously. A seven-member panel will be formed to select a sculptor and secure the necessary funds.

S. Carolina Baptists grieve losses, tackle record flooding



SUPPLY LINE — Baptist Collegiate Ministry students from the University of South Carolina in Columbia help set up a South Carolina Baptist disaster relief feeding unit at Riverland Hills Church in Columbia, after a 1,000-year flood devastated much of the state. (BP photo courtesy of Baptist Courier)

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP) — First Church, Columbia, S.C., has reason to mourn. Yet, like so many other churches in Columbia, S.C., and across the state, First Church is engaging in ministry as flooding continues the ongoing battle with Hurricane Joaquin survivors and first responders.

Richard Milroy, 82, "died in his car sometime in the last couple of days due to devastating floods," minister of discipleship Wes Church wrote to First Church members, The Baptist Courier, newsjournal of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, reported Oct. 6.

"How do we even begin to put into words all of the emotions we are experiencing?" Church said. "There is so much heartbreak and need in our community."

Milroy was one of 17 drowning or auto accident fatalities from the hurricane's downpours in South and North Carolina.

Some First Church members lost homes or cars, and some lost

all their belongings. College and high school students and their leaders are helping clean up flood-damaged homes.

First Church also is housing 13 South Carolina Baptist disaster relief volunteers who are feeding more than 1,000 first responders at a nearby city maintenance area. Volunteers are coordinating with a sister church to collect donations of bottled water and are delivering refreshments to security personnel, EMS staff, and firemen.

First Church's outreach is being replicated by churches in numerous other locales. Richard Harris, interim executive director-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, wrote to the state's Baptists in a letter posted by the Baptist Courier on Oct. 6: "We say we are serious about presenting the Gospel to everyone in South Carolina and to fulfilling the Great Commission in our lifetime. This flood crisis provides one of the greatest opportunities to reveal our love for our fellow citizens and

obedience to the Lord who commissioned us. The empowering of the Holy Spirit is ours to change the population of heaven and hell as we love folks in Jesus' name."

Harris, recapping the trauma inflicted by Hurricane Joaquin, noted: "South Carolina has experienced historic rainfall and flooding that few of us have experienced in our lifetime. Thousands across our state have lost homes or had significant damage to their homes, as well as vehicles and other personal property. Business owners are facing huge damage to buildings and inventory loss. Numerous churches (many of our SCBC churches) and their members have felt the wrath of the heavy rains and flooding."

"Throughout Columbia and much of the state," Harris continued, "the roads, highways and interstates, as well as much of the state's infrastructure (water, electrical, sewer, etc.), have notable damage which will require days and weeks to repair."

Just for the Record



GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG, held its annual Blessing of the Hunt wild game dinner to kick off the 2015 season. The TV crew from Trained Assassins provided the entertainment and door prizes. Shown are the prize winners.

In other Church News:

➤ **First Church, Eupora**, is hosting The Nelons in concert Oct. 22, 7 p.m. Local singers, 6:30 p.m. Love offering.

➤ **Athens Church, Mendenhall**, is having a dedication service for their new church building Oct. 18, 10:30 a.m.

➤ **Fellowship Church, Meridian**, ordained Scotty Elliot and Adam Stewart as deacons Sept. 13. Corey Fontan, pastor.

➤ **Concord Church, Mize**, will have a steeple dedication service Oct. 25, 11 a.m., followed a covered dish meal and music by Calm Assurance Quartet. Jim Futral, speaker.



FIRST CHURCH, MORTON, recognizes those with perfect attendance from Sept. 2014 – Aug. 2015. Shown are Bennett Merchant, Eugene Blackburn, Virginia Thompson, Maurice Stegall, and Judy Stegall.



IMMANUEL CHURCH, CLEVELAND, recognized David Gladden as volunteer music minister for the past five years Oct. 4. Steve Huber, pastor.



STRAYHORN CHURCH, SARAH, ordained Blake Walker to the gospel ministry Oct. 4. Shown are Walker and pastor Mike Porter.



CROSS ROADS CHURCH, PELAHATCHIE, recently held a Back to Church revival. Shown are Rachel and Travis Thompson who enjoyed having their picture drawn by guest speaker Joe McKeever.



Nearly 30 women from **NORTH DELTA ASSOCIATION WMU** enjoyed a gathering and luncheon at the fall meeting at **HOLLYWOOD CHURCH, SLEDGE**.



NEWHEBRON CHURCH, NEWHEBRON, held a baby dedication Sept. 21. Shown are the participants and pastor Mike Grenn.



LAKELAND CHURCH, ITAWAMBA COUNTY, held a baby dedication Oct. 4. Shown are Easton Dickerson with his parents Taylor and Maggie Dickerson and pastor Kelly Knight.



Danny Wade of **SPRINGFIELD CHURCH, MORTON**, was honored with an ice cream supper for almost 30 years service as custodian. He is shown with pastor Don Wilson.



WADE CHURCH, WADE, ordained Phillip Busby, Jens Pedersen Sr., and Kevin Fant as deacons Oct. 4. Shown are Busby, Kaila Busby, Gayle Pedersen, Pedersen, Keira Fant, and Fant.

First Person: Ukraine Christians deliver food, hope

By Tom Long
Correspondent

Life along the road to the war front seemed normal: gardens surrounding every home, villagers taking their cows out to pasture, huge sunflower fields dotting the landscape nearby. It didn't look like we were less than 13 miles from the war front.

I met Victor (not his real name) last summer. At that time, the 30-something believer was helping evacuate people from Ukrainian towns and villages where the war was raging. Now he works with a ministry that assists internally displaced people.

Two to three times a week, Victor visits the war front to deliver food and hope to those in need.

This particular morning, we loaded 300-plus loaves of bread directly from a bakery into a van and headed toward the front at 5:30 a.m. After six checkpoints in more than two hours on the road, we finally arrived.

Two hundred yards from the church stood three buildings that had been heavily damaged by mortar shells the other day. Fortunately, the church building did not sustain any damage.

We were greeted by Sasha (not his real name), a young man in his 20s whose age disguises his maturity and his heart for the people who have endured more than a year of war.

Sasha is not the pastor of this church, but he finds himself in that position now that the pastor and another leader have left. Someone suggested they lock up the church building and all of them leave.

"I was against the idea," Sasha said. "The church, like Christians, must stand in the most difficult times. We must be here to minister."

The church is doing just that. Every day they prepare a hot

meal and deliver it by bicycle to more than 40 people unable to leave their homes due to physical immobility. They started distributing food back in February when temperatures were below freezing, and they have continued to deliver meals no matter the weather.

"Ministry isn't just singing songs and preaching on Sundays," Sasha said. "During this time, we need to go to the people and help deliver food and water," he said.

Someone donated a generator to the church, so now they are able to provide a charging place for phones and computers when the electricity doesn't work.

Covering windows and roofs damaged by shelling is another ministry of the church. With winter not too far away, they hope to purchase particle board to cover broken windows.

Funds also are needed for a vehicle to deliver food to the homebound and for medicine and other supplies that are in demand because no shops are open in the city.

When Victor and others come to town, they take food packets to families with children. Victor and his ministry receive some support from Global Hunger Fund gifts from Southern Baptists distributed by Baptist Global Response to provide the packets. To help bring a smile to the numerous kids waiting for him, Victor also brings Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes of school and hygiene supplies and small toys.

"Before the war, few people knew there was a Baptist church. Now, everyone knows there is a Baptist church," Sasha remarked about the role the church now plays in the community.

Tom Long is a Christian worker in Ukraine. This article appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.



PRECIOUS FOOD — Victor (not his real name), a Ukrainian believer involved in ministry to people displaced by the war in his country, prepares to load bread into his vehicle for delivery to a Baptist church for distribution to its war-battered community. (BP photo courtesy of Tom Long)



ANOTHER CHANCE? — After decades of war, the people of South Sudan celebrated independence on July 9, 2011. The war was primarily a Muslim Arab versus Christian African conflict. Eighteen months later the country was plunged into violent civil war. A peace accord was signed in August this year. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

Politicians, missionaries disagree over South Sudan

JUBA, South Sudan (BP) — While United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon alluded to "a new window of opportunity" for peace in war-torn and famine-stricken South Sudan, one missionary there said "the window is small" for sharing the Gospel in the world's youngest nation.

Ban was speaking Sept. 29 at a high-level meeting of the U.N. as part of its General Assembly debates, which included leaders from around the world. Ban said it is "a pivotal moment" for the country of South Sudan.

However, Robert Lane, who serves with the International Mission Board (IMB) in South Sudan, warned that "the window is small. We don't know how long South Sudan will be open. Now the Gospel can be proclaimed, but there are risks." He added, though, "The Gospel is worth them all and a thousand more."

Having gained independence from Republic of the Sudan in July 2011, South Sudan was thrust into a violent civil war 18 months later when its president Salva Kiir dismissed his deputy Riek Machar, accusing him of instigating a rebellion.

The ouster sparked hostilities along ethnic lines, primarily between the Dinka and Nuer tribes, resulting in one of the world's worst humanitarian crises in recent times.

Both sides have been accused of committing atrocities among the general population, and the conflict has created a mass movement of peoples being displaced within South Sudan or becoming refugees in neighboring countries.

The war and migrations have contributed to severe fam-

Pray

■ Pray for the training and equipping of local missionaries of the Baptist Convention of South Sudan to go and minister within refugee camps outside the country's borders.

■ Pray for the efforts of local Baptist churches and the Baptist Convention of South Sudan as they seek to minister with food, clothing, shelter, and spiritual counsel to those displaced within the country.

■ Pray for those serving with IMB as they minister within camps of South Sudan, northeast Uganda, and Chad.

■ Pray the efforts of both IMB and the Baptist Convention of South Sudan will help produce new believers and churches planted.

ine conditions in some parts of the country.

In August of this year, a peace accord was signed between the two warring factions. "When the parties signed the agreement ..., they created a new window of opportunity," Ban said. "I urge the signatories to honor their solemn commitment and implement the agreement without delay. Reverting to war yet again cannot be an option."

Tim Cearley, IMB strategy leader for sub-Saharan Africa, said, "Pray for the Prince of Peace to be made known in the midst of this fledgling country, wracked by tribal fighting, political warring, cyclical drought, decades of civil war and unrest."

"Pray for God's peace to come to South Sudan, through believers in the camps, through warriors turning to Christ, and

through the miraculous transformation of individual hearts that only He can bring."

Within the country Christians are, indeed, praying for a true and lasting peace, noted pastor Ellie Sworo.

"Christians stood in prayer and fasting for peace in the country," Sworo, who leads Nuru Church in Juba, said. "Glory to God that the peace accord is already signed. Christians are now praying for the implementation process and the interim period, that it would be a very peaceful one."

Sworo said many Baptists have been affected by the conflict, with most taking refuge at U.N. camps either within the country or outside its borders.

"When the crisis started, the church — the Baptist Convention of South Sudan — supported by providing shelter to fleeing citizens, feeding them for several days before they transitioned to refugee camps," he said. "The church would still love to support affected citizens with any available funding."

Sworo said the Baptist Convention of Sudan is currently providing "spiritual support" to South Sudanese refugees in Uganda. "There are five local missionaries working among the refugees to spread the Gospel of Christ and help in true reconciliation among tribes by teaching about forgiveness, reconciliation, etc.," he said.

"This is the major task of the church — to bring lasting peace to the nations through teaching and reaching out the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

In spite of long-term war and displacement, God is at work, Cearley said.

Journey from Zen Buddhism to Christianity to church planter

MIAMI, Fla. (BP) — Aldo Leon, a self-described Cuban-American Miami boy, recently moved back to Miami from Los Angeles to plant Reconcile Church Miami with the purpose of reaching the lost in south Dade County.

Leon, 33, married and a father of two, wasn't always so passionate about the Gospel. He says he grew up in a home that was very "unreligious," and in college he had very liberal professors who fed his dislike for religion — Christianity in particular.

"I was taking criminal justice courses, and the professors would attack Christianity, and I would swallow it all," Leon said.

In his 20s, Leon had a Christian girlfriend who is now his wife. Every time she invited him to church or talked about God, he said, they would fight.

"That was the extent of our conversations about religion," he said.

Leon became involved in boxing and as he trained and became more serious about the sport, his trainers suggested he read up on Zen Buddhism because some of its aspects would be beneficial to his boxing.

"I wanted to be this great fighter, and I really got into this religion," Leon said.

He bought all the books, read all the articles, watched videos and really delved into Zen Buddhism. In the midst of his studies he came upon a chapter that suggested to Westerners to get familiarized with Jesus. For Buddhists, Jesus is one of many enlightened beings but not the Son of God.

Leon got his hands on a New King James New Testament to learn about Jesus like his book suggested. "Not because I was looking for the Jesus of the Bible, but the idolatrous Jesus of Buddhism," he said.

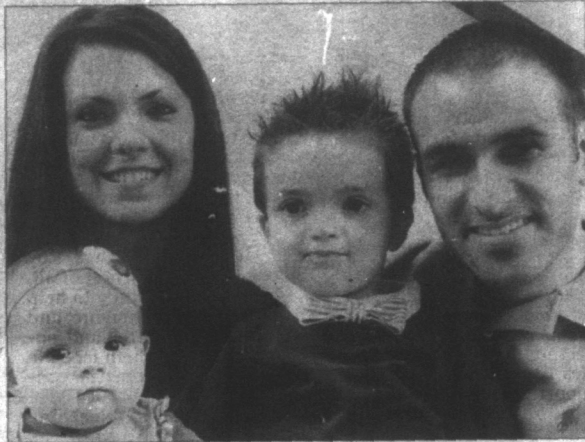
Everything changed after that. "Something happened to me that I haven't gotten over since," Leon said. "I began to believe what was written about Christ. It was very strange for me because I wasn't really looking for Jesus, but He was finding me."

"One month prior I was arguing with my wife and ripping her away from her faith, and the next I'm battling to stand on biblical truths and morals."

That all happened in 2007. After completing his ministry education at The Master's Seminary in Los Angeles, Leon came back to Miami with the desire to plant a church.

"I felt a need to attack areas of great [Gospel] need and do it with passion," he said.

Conversations with Al Fernandez, a regional catalyst



ALDO LEON (RIGHT) AND FAMILY

for the Florida Baptist Convention, and Jose Abella, lead pastor of Providence Road Church in Miami, confirmed God's calling for Leon to plant in Miami.

Reconcile Church Miami is set to launch in October.

Gary Johnson, director of missions for Miami Association, heard Leon's story during a new works meeting in July. He felt that it was one of those stories that just had to be shared. Johnson, however, was more interested in seeing Leon join Miami Association like many other millennial pastors are doing.

Leon said joining Miami Association makes sense because church planting is not something that can be done alone. Not only that, but being part of the association makes him and his church a part of something much bigger than themselves, and that is important to him.

Leon noted he's often thought about the similarities between his conversion story and the Apostle Paul's. While the Zen Buddhism aspect of his conversion story is an interesting one, he says that what really drives him to share the Gospel is his realization about how lost he once was and how miraculously he was saved, much like Paul.

"I've never gotten over the fact that I was a person who was lost and is now saved," Leon said. "When I converse with lost people, there is an empathy and understanding of where they are at."

"Some Christians don't know how to have a conversation with a lost person, and they can kind of say these cookie-cutter things but not really connect. When [lost] people ask questions and say the difficult things that some [lost] people say, I'm able to respond to that."

LEWIS

cont. from p.2

Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook with the hashtag #LiftMyPastor showing how you lift your pastor with one of NAMB's resources.

Posts should include details of why and how the church body chose to lift their pastor. Each social media post that uses the hashtag #LiftMyPastor will be entered for the chance to bring Shane and

Shane to their church for a worship night.

Visit facebook.com/NAMB. SBC for details and more about entering your church's example of pastor appreciation.

Lewis is executive director of pastoral care and development for the North American Mission Board, headquartered in Alpharetta, Ga. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.

CLASSIFIEDS

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MANSFIELD, LOUISIANA IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF WORSHIP AND ADULT MINISTRIES. Please send resumes to: First Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 1710 McArthur Drive, Mansfield, LA 71052.

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MS POSITIONS

STRONGHOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL YOUTH MINISTER. All resumes can be sent to Stronghope Baptist Church, attention Search Committee, 5006 Monticello Rd., Wesson, Ms 39191 or email to shbsearchcommittee@yahoo.com

BLTYHE CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH, CHOCTAW ASSOCIATION, IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER TO STUDENTS. Email resumes to our Student Minister Search Committee at blythecreekbc@gmail.com or mail to 261 Blythe Creek Road, Mathiston, MS 39752.

GUM SPRINGS CHURCH, BRAXTON, MISSISSIPPI SEEKS PIANIST to serve during Sunday morning and evening worship, and Sunday evening choir practice. Please submit resume to the Pianist Search Committee c/o Music Director, 375 Gum Springs Road, Braxton, Mississippi 39044, or email to jmanderson1575@gmail.com

LIBERTY BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLOWOOD IS SEEKING A MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES. Please submit resumes to Liberty Baptist Church, 5199 Lakeland Drive, Flowood, MS 39232 or email to office@fcbflowood.org.

GOSS BAPTIST CHURCH, COLUMBIA, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A MUSIC MINISTER THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 2015. Please send resumes to 20 Mark McArthur Dr., Columbia, MS 39429 ATTN: Music Search Committee or email to markmc26@att.net.

GOSS BAPTIST CHURCH IN COLUMBIA, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Please send resumes attention Youth search committee to 20 Mark McArthur Drive, Columbia, MS 39429 or online at markmc26@att.net.

HIGHLAND BAPTIST IN SENATOBIA, MS IS TAKING RESUMES FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITIONS: Part-Time Secretary, Part-Time Minister of Students/Youth and College age) Part-Time Music Minister. Send to Highland Baptist Church, Attn: Search Comm., P.O. Box 425, Senatobia, MS 38668 or via email to Pastor@hbsenatobia.com

FBC PEARL IS LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME MUSIC MINISTER. Experience in leading Choir and Praise Teams, blended services. Email resume to scottcrawford01@msn.com. \$250.00 a week

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH IN MONTICELLO, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. You may call 601-320-2785 for more information.

MURPHY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MINISTRY ASSISTANT. Please send resumes to the church at 5420 Bond Road, Louisville, MS 39339. Resumes will be accepted through Octob. 31, 2015. They can also be e-mailed to mcbcmayo@yahoo.com.

COPIAH COUNTY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION SEEKING PART-TIME ASSOCIATION MISSION DIRECTOR. Please send Resumes to: Mr. Larry Papizan, Copiah County Baptist Association, P.O. Box 230, Hazlehurst MS 39083.

THE TRI-COUNTY BAPTIST MISSION (LAWRENCE, MARION, AND WALTHALL BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS) IS RECEIVING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATE ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR through October 31, 2015. Resumes can be mailed to PO Box 350, Columbia MS 39429 (attention Executive Committee), or emailed to tricitybaptistmissions@gmail.com.

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VNWRX CASG: RODLE

Clue: $T = N$

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John 12:24

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39206-0530. FAX: (601) 252-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

RANKIN

cont. from p. 1

for participants to complete online study programs. CWJC is a ministry of the Woman's Missionary Union auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention in Birmingham, and is managed in Mississippi by the state WMU office.

"I'm excited to say that Hands UP Outreach is a multi-purpose ministry of Rankin Baptists," said Mary Callahan, co-director of Hands UP Outreach, Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC), and Christian Men's Job Corps (CMJC) of Rankin County.

"We are striving to model the love of Jesus Christ and to meet the needs of the broken, wounded, and discouraged of Mississippi."

Hands UP Outreach provides life and job skills, GED support, and spiritual development to two separate groups: those in need in the community, and those in prison.

"Our community outreach reaches men and women facing life challenges needing

encouragement, nurture, and support," said Roy Callahan, co-director and husband of Mary.

"We teach life skills and job skills to the offenders inside the prisons so that when they return to the community, they will be prepared," said Mary.

"This program includes literacy and GED tutoring," Roy added. "Most important of all, we provide Bible study to help them in their spiritual life, and we include a mentor and encourager to help them face life challenges they come in contact with every day."

"Our theme is, 'Reaching Up, Reaching Out,' meaning, reaching up with the word of God and reaching out in our community," Roy said. "We're always in need of prayer and

"We are striving to model the love of Jesus Christ and to meet the needs of the broken, wounded, and discouraged of Mississippi."

Mary Callahan

co-director of Hands UP Outreach

volunteers. We need GED tutors, teachers, encouragers, mentors, prayer warriors, and financial support."

Allen Stephens, missions director for Rankin Association, stressed how important the ministry is in the state often found at the bottom of literacy statistics. "Many Mississippians need a diploma or GED to go on to college or to get a good job. This ministry is committed to restoring the whole person."

The Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is one of the funding sources that helps support the work of the Rankin Association ministries.

Baptist Press contributed to this article.

SMALL

cont. from p. 1

helped me get grounded in the Word. I'm indebted to them and those 19 people who let me share the Word with them. They took a risk on a 20-year-old because they felt God was in it.

"My hope is that the people who attended, along with two or three more faithful followers of Jesus, can make a difference. The attendance is phenomenal, and that's encouraging. I want these people to see that it's not about huge numbers. If they can go home and get two or three people around them, they can make a dent in the darkness."

One unique element of the conference was the real-time polling via the participants' smartphones, Orman said.

"Once the polling period ended, results returned to the participants automatically. This, coupled with Dr. Lawless having the analysis in real time, allowed them to use the data as he spoke. Two questions were put before the participants, with them being asked to write their responses to the questions on two very large Post-It notes.

"The questions, 'Why serve a smaller membership church?' and, 'What derails your ministry most?' were designed to engage the participants from the get-go to determine for themselves

the calling of God on their lives, and how distractions rob one of ministry effectiveness."

Lawless encouraged participants to be faithful over the small things, "if we have any intention to be used of God for larger things. There's a great value in paying the price of just being a humble servant."

Orman described the meeting as a success. "I was thrilled we had so many younger pastors. Absolutely awesome!"

For more information on small church ministries, contact Orman at MBCB, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3291 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 291. E-mail: rorman@mbcb.org.

Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

SEPTEMBER 1-15, 2015

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Mrs. Judy Didon
Unity BC, Adult 3 SSC
Mr. Garveese Dillon
Mr. & Mrs. Doc Oakman
Mrs. Eileen Dubose
W. B. Webb
Otha Mae Edwards
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The Larry Melton Family
Mrs. Etta McIntosh
Ms. Jeanette Calloway
Janelle McWhirter
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Donald
William (Bill) Meredith
Mr. & Mrs. Charles G. Bevil
Mrs. Ava Mitchell
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Flanagan
J. V. and Mary K. Parker
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Parker
Kevin Parkinson
Mr. Charles W. Holmes
Mrs. Kim Reed
Mrs. Theron Poole
Larry Seago
Wade, Lisa & Granny
Donna Neyland Shinaberry
Mr. & Mrs. Jackie Wooley
Rev. E. J. Slonaker
Mr. & Mrs. Percy J. Peeler
Mr. Earl Wade Smith
Mount Vernon BC
Mrs. Dean Crane Somers
Mr. & Mrs. Arthur E. Bishop
Elaine Sorrels
Blackwater BC
David Spring
Mr. & Mrs. Percy J. Peeler
Gerald Stanford
Bill & Beth Herrington
Mrs. JoAnn Britt
Ms. Beth Suarez
Mary Allen and Ric Varnell
Mrs. Neva Summerlin
Rev. William B. Webb
Betty Suttle
Patricia & Annie Pearl Triplett
Mrs. Francis Wages
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Sims
Dana Walley
Mr. & Mrs. Warren Strickland
Doyce B. Ward
Mr. & Mrs. F. R. Clark
James Webb
Teeny Frankel

Mrs. Margaret B. Williams
The Dennis R. Switzer
Families

SEPTEMBER 16-30, 2015

HONORS

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Dr. & Mrs. Victor L. Welsh
5th Floor Nurses & Patient Care
Staff Baptist Hospital
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan
Mrs. Bessie Saway
Mrs. Johnnie W. Brock
Sherry and Charlie Vaughn
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry
Jan Weede
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry

SEPTEMBER 16-30, 2015

MEMORIALS

Mr. William Allen
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Mrs. Lester Alvis
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Taylor
Mr. Mike Ballas
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Thomas Blaine Barlow
Mr. & Mrs. J. C. Rhymes
Mr. & Mrs. Wayne Tillman
Billy Barnes
Pheba BC
Mr. Otis Beach
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmie L. Manton
Dr. Dewey Blackledge
Mr. & Mrs. Fred H. Blackledge
Mr. & Mrs. John Logan
Jessica Blalock
Dr. & Mrs. Gerald J. Hasselman
Mrs. Sandra Bolden
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Mr. Cecil "Jabe" Boulter
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Dean
Mr. Elmo Breazeale
Jimmy & Jo Jenkins
Andrew Parker Breland
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan
Julian Breland
Mr. & Mrs. Reese Douglas, Jr.
Parker Breland
Dr. & Mrs. Gerald J. Hasselman
Mr. Charles (Bo) Brewer
Mr. & Mrs. Joe H. Cleveland
Leon Browning
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan
Mrs. Erma Buckley
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmie L. Manton
Jahazel Buckley
Mr. Ted Buckley
Mr. Elvin Case
Dr. & Mrs. Victor L. Walsh
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry
Steve Cobb
Mrs. Jenna Parsons
Clifford Cornelius
Dr. & Mrs. Harold Ward
Paul Cossitt
Mrs. Nancy W. Wilbanks
Mary Ella Daughdrill
Daniel, Dianne & Alissa Smith
Nellie L. Davis
Mrs. Ramona D. Baron
Robert Deason
Jimmy & Jo Jenkins
Mrs. Frances Dadds
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Joe Williams
William "Bill" Edington
Arlington Heights BC
Billy Ray Fairley
Brandon & Lauren Bell
Tommie Jean Fauver
Mr. & Mrs. Joe Frost
Mr. Gene Fincher
Ms. Carolyn C. Pogue
Martha Clara Kennedy Fitzner
Mr. & Mrs. R. N. Humphreys
Mr. Ingram Foster
Mr. & Mrs. John Logan

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

We believe that when the life of one child is changed, generations are changed, which is why, everyone of the 282 children ministered to through both residential and non-residential programs are so special and significant. Breaking the cycle of abuse, neglect, poverty, illiteracy, etc. in the life of a child and introducing them to the hope and love of Jesus Christ means that their future and the futures of their children and grandchildren can take a new course.

This past year we have seen many new challenges in our ministry and many successes. Here are a few highlights:

- We have seen a significant increase in the number of toddler and pre-school aged children in our care which has meant a need for many more resources like car seats, booster seats, diapers and training pants, early-childhood education, etc. We are so thankful to have this opportunity to provide a safe and loving home for these precious little ones.

- 265 children in the last 11 years have made profession of faith. Seeds for these decisions were planted in local host church worship services, small group Bible studies, Vacation Bible Schools, Disciple Now, as well as summer camps such as Central Hills and Camp Garaywa. The children are also nurtured in their faith during daily devotions and prayer time in their BCV cottages.

- The Dorcas In-Home Service Program (non-residential) continues to help Mississippi families stay together. The Dorcas Program is structured to improve the ability of the family to provide adequate care for the children for whom they are responsible. We began serving 8 counties in 2012 and by the end of 2015 plan to be in 32 counties. During the first four years of the Dorcas Program, 310 children have been served. To date, over 97 percent of the children who have been a part of the Dorcas Program have been able to stay with their families and out of state custody.

On Tuesday, October, 27th BCV Executive Director, Dr. Rory Lee, will give a report before the messengers of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. If you are unable to attend, you may read his printed report at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

When God Calls • Genesis 12:1-9

God's answer to human's continuing in sin was not another flood. He had scattered and confused those who sought to make a name for themselves at Babel, and He said He would no longer curse the ground (Genesis 8:21). His permanent answer to our sin was to call a man, Abram. Genesis 12:1-3 details God's call to the man from Sumeria, who lived in Haran. Last week we noted that the lineage of Shem was completed after the Tower of Babel event and gave the ages of the men. We discover why this week, for Abram was of the lineage of Shem. While many of the offspring of Shem, Ham, and Japheth were not given in the Genesis account, the ancestors of Abram were clearly listed, including their ages.

God was up to something amazing, for He revealed His grand plan of salvation in, a plan that would take 2,000 more years to fulfill in the death, burial, and glorious resurrection of Jesus. God loves to use the unusable so that He gets the glory, so the Lord called 75-year-old Abram. He then waited twenty-five more years to fulfill His promise of an heir, so that all this was clearly of God and none of man. Abram and Sarai were childless. We would have chosen the Dugger family of Nineteen and Counting fame today, but God chose the disappoint-

ed and childless couple of Abram and Sarai from which to birth His nation, Israel.

The Lord told Abram in Genesis 12:1 to leave his country, his family, and his home. Imagine if you received that call from God: "Leave it all and go to an unknown place." Abram obeyed the Lord. I wonder how he explained it to his wife and family. I am certain shock and awe were the order of that day.

God told Abram to go to a land he would show him. Abram left his land, where he was one of many, and God gave him a land that would belong to his offspring for millennia. Abram, his wife Sarai, and his nephew, Lot, left their nation behind. God promised Abram that He would make from Abram a great nation.

Abram, in obedience to God, left his home, family, and country. God gave him instead a land of God's choosing, made of

him a great nation, promised to bless him, promised to make his name great, promised the Abram would himself be a blessing. God pledged to Abram, "I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you," Genesis 12:3 (KJV). Lastly and prophetically, God stated that Abram will be a blessing to all families, quite a promise to a childless couple.

God's last promise was revealed

through Abram's obedience. Genesis 15:6 reads, "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness," (KJV). This

verse introduced the biblical principle of imputed righteousness. God's word is clear that no one is saved through his own righteousness, (Romans 3:10-12, 20-23). Romans 3:23-25 reads, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom

God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins," (KJV). Abram trusted God who saved him.

Those who receive God's gift of salvation and payment for their sins are today part of Abram's family. Romans 4:13 reads, "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith," (KJV). God is more interested in spiritual offspring than Abram's bloodline. Galatians 3:29 explains, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," (KJV).

Abram left his nation, but God created a nation from his offspring. He left his kinfolk, and God gave him more kin than can be counted. Abram left his father's house, but became the father of a great family, both physically and spiritually. Obedience to God results in what God can give. Following our own way yields what we can give. God still calls people to obey and serve Him. Are you listening and obeying?

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.



Explore the Bible
with Rick Henson

Develop Conviction • Daniel 1: 3-5, 8-13, 17-19

From 1938-1939, Nicholas Winton, a well-to-do British gentleman, engineered a plan that rescued 669 mostly Jewish children from Czechoslovakia. "It involved dangers, bribes, forgery, secret contacts with the Gestapo, nine railroad trains, an avalanche of paperwork and a lot of money," relates a New York Times article. Winton's incredible bravery and cunning saved the lives of these, who most-likely would have perished in the Holocaust.

Believers through the centuries have been called to confront a status-quo that runs counter to biblical beliefs. Today, Christians challenge abortionists, seek to rescue those snared by sex-traffickers, meet needs of the homeless, and tackle other issues of our fallen world. Jesus modeled doing such (see Luke 4:18-19). Today, we begin a six-week series called "Game Changer: How to Impact Your World". Journeying through key passag-

es in the book of Daniel, we'll see a role model in this courageous Bible hero, who, though a captive in a foreign land, stood his ground with grace and faith.

The setting for today's lesson portrays a sad time for the Jews. They were divided into the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (Judah). The Assyrians had already conquered the Northern Kingdom, and Judah was quite weak. God had lifted His hand of protection from His rebellious people. In 605 B.C., Babylon laid siege to the land. Nebuchad-

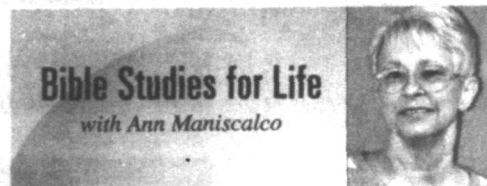
nezzar, the conquering king, confiscated some articles from the temple of God and brought them to "the treasure house of his god" (Daniel 1:2 NIV). He not only took these special inanimate objects, he ordered his highest official, Ashpenaz, to bring some young men of Israelite nobility to Babylon. There, they would receive training to serve the king. Those selected were

to be "the cream of the crop": physically-fit, handsome, intelligent, and receptive learners (see v.4). Ashpenaz was commissioned to "teach them the language

and literature of the Babylonians" over a period of three years (vs. 4-5).

The intended result of this intensive training was a thorough brainwashing, designed to reshape the mindset and lifestyle of the trainees, causing them to fully embrace Babylonian culture. To begin integrating the youth into their new culture, Ashpenaz assigned them new names (four young men are presented in this passage): Daniel was named Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Mishael, Meshach; and Azariah, Abednego (v.7). Although they were essentially slaves, the Scripture alludes that they were well-treated. King Nebuchadnezzar provided food and wine from his own table. However, partaking of the physical nourishment would have meant consuming food and drink forbidden by Jewish dietary laws.

Ann Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



Bible Studies for Life
with Ann Maniscalco

Churches celebrate 'significant anniversaries' in 2016

CLINTON, Ms. (Special) — The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission (MBHC) has announced that a total of 34 Mississippi Baptist churches representing 6,275 years of Kingdom work will reach significant milestones in 2016. The churches are being urged to celebrate those anniversaries by MBHC executive director Anthony Kay.

A significant anniversary is defined by the commission as 200 years, 175 years, 150 years, 125 years, and 100 years. Each church that informs MBHC

of their significant anniversary celebration will receive a framed certificate and letter of commendation.

The commission requests that any church celebrating a significant anniversary that is not included in the list below contact MBHC at P.O. Box 4024, Clinton, MS 39058. Telephone: (601) 925-3434. E-mail: mbhc@mc.edu.

Churches celebrating significant anniversaries in 2016, followed by the Baptist association in which membership is held, include:

200 Years (1)

Hepzibah (Lawrence)

175 Years (8)

Bethel (Lafayette)
Border Springs
(Golden Triangle)
Conehatta (Newton)
Evansville
(X-tended Mission)
Fellowship (Benton-Tippah)
First, Abbeville (Lafayette)
First, Barton (Marshall)
Macedonia (Simpson)

150 Years (9)

Carson Ridge (Attala)
Clarkson (Webster)
Enon (Jasper)
First, Byhalia (Marshall)
First, Booneville (Prentiss)
First, Marion (Lauderdale)
Good Hope (Neshoba)
Philadelphia (Lincoln)
Union (Rankin)

125 Years (12)

Banner (Calhoun)
Blue Springs (Union County)
FBC, Glendale (Lebanon)

Fifteenth Avenue (Lauderdale)
Goss (Marion)
Gum Grove (Lincoln)
Kilmichael (Montgomery)
Lone Oak (Alcorn)
Mt. Olive (Mississippi)
Mt. Pleasant (Mississippi)
New Sardis (Smith)
Straight Bayou
(Sharkey-Issaquena)

100 Years (4)

Antioch (Greene)
Cross Roads (Rankin)
First, Potts Camp (Marshall)
Greater Mt. Calvary (At Large)

Survey: Most Americans believe in creation

NASHVILLE (BP) — Life didn't just happen, most Americans say, and a surprising number of non-religious people agree, a newly released study says.

More than four in 10 of the non-religious believe physics and humanity point to a creator, LifeWay Research finds. A third say human morality indicates a creator who defines right and wrong.

The study, released Oct. 7, is based on a survey taken Sept. 26-Oct. 5, 2014.

Although the non-religious are less likely than other Americans to see evidence of a creator, they are more likely to agree (46%) than disagree (40%) with the statement, "Since the universe has organization, I think there is a creator who designed it."

Traditional evidences for belief in a creator resonate with most Americans, including many of the non-religious, said Ed Stetzer, executive director of Nashville-based LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

"People who seek to set out reasons to believe, often called apologetics, have historically framed their argument in similar ways," Stetzer said. "The large number of nonreligious people agreeing with some of these arguments points us to a surprising openness to classic apologetic arguments or, put another way, even nonreligious people are open to the idea there is a creator."

Not blind chance

Human life and a complex universe are powerful indicators of creation, Americans say. LifeWay Research found almost 79% believe the existence of human life means someone created it, while 72% think the organization of the universe shows a creator's design.

"The infinitesimal odds that life arose by blind chance is a formidable argument," said Mary Jo Sharp, assistant professor of apologetics at Houston Baptist University, and an author and speaker in the field.

Americans are less certain whether a creator defines right and wrong. A smaller majority, 66%, says people's moral values attest to a creator who determines morality.

"Similar moral threads across cultures are evidence for many that someone has imprinted a common standard upon the human conscience," Stetzer said. "However, it is worth noting the moral argument has less sway here, perhaps because of our changing views on what is and is not moral."

Religious differences

Many atheists, agnostics, and those with no religious preference find the existence of human life to be a persuasive argument for a creator, with 43% agreeing: "The fact that we exist means someone created us." However, a larger share (48%) disagrees.

The existence of good and evil is a less compelling argument for the non-religious. Fifty-three percent disagree with the statement: "Since people have morality, I think there is a creator who defines morality." Nevertheless, 33% think human morals point to a creator who defines right and wrong.

"The existence of good and evil is difficult to explain from an atheistic worldview, because in that view, there is no stable external grounding outside

"In an increasingly secular age, where the Christian faith has perhaps lost its home-field advantage, Christians will need to make their case for the creator and ultimately for the Gospel. It appears people — even non-religious people — are indeed open to apologetics arguments, if Christians will actually make them."

Ed Stetzer

executive director of
LifeWay Research

of humans for a standard of goodness," Sharp said.

Not surprisingly, Christians — particularly evangelicals — overwhelmingly say they see compelling proof of a creator. As evidence, 91% of Christians and 95% of evangelicals point to the existence of humanity, while 81% of Christians and 85% of evangelicals cite the structure of the universe.

They are slightly less confident that the existence of morality proves a creator who determines moral values, with 77% of Christians and 83% of evangelicals saying human morals indicate a creator who defines right and wrong.

Age gap

Although most American adults of all ages believe in a creator, a sharp uptick emerges at midlife. On every measure, Americans ages 45 and older are more likely to see evidence of a creator than those ages 18-44.

The gap is widest on the question of morality. Three-quarters of those ages 45 and older agree the presence of human moral values indicates a creator who defines right and wrong, an opinion shared by only 57% of adults ages 44 and younger. Disagreement is twice as common among Americans ages 18-44 (34%) as those ages 45 and older (17%).

Younger Americans are also more likely than those ages 45 and older to believe human life may exist without a creator. Eighty-six percent of those ages 45 and older agree the presence of human beings points to a creator. Only one in 10 disagrees. Among those ages 18-44, however, 72% believe human life is evidence of a creator and 22% disagree.

Seventy-seven percent of those ages 45 and older consider the orderliness of the universe to be a sign of a creator, a view held by two-thirds (66%) of those ages 18-44.

LifeWay Research also found differences by gender and geographic region.

Men (22%) are more likely than women (17%) to disagree that the structure of the universe points to a creator. Women, meanwhile, are more likely (85%) than men (73%) to believe the existence of human life means someone created it.

The survey found a surprising alignment of opinion between the usually dissimilar Northeast and South. Northeasters (87%) and Southerners (82%) are more likely than those in the West (71%) to view the presence of human life as an indication of a creator.

Is there a Creator?

COMPARING VIEWS OF NONRELIGIOUS & ALL AMERICANS

Since the universe has organization, I think there is a creator who designed it.

NONRELIGIOUS AMERICANS

46%
AGREE

40%
DISAGREE

13% NOT SURE

ALL AMERICANS

72%
AGREE

19%
DISAGREE

9% NOT SURE

The fact we exist means someone created us.

NONRELIGIOUS AMERICANS

43%
AGREE

48%
DISAGREE

9% NOT SURE

ALL AMERICANS

79%
AGREE

16%
DISAGREE

5% NOT SURE

Since people have morality, I think there is a creator who defines morality.

NONRELIGIOUS AMERICANS

33%
AGREE

53%
DISAGREE

15% NOT SURE

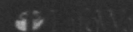
ALL AMERICANS

66%
AGREE

25%
DISAGREE

8% NOT SURE

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.



LifeWayResearch.com

Methodology

The phone survey of Americans was conducted Sept. 26-Oct. 5, 2014. The calling utilized random digit dialing. Sixty percent of completes were among landlines and 40 percent among cell phones. Maximum quotas and slight weights were used for gender, region, age, ethnicity and education to more accurately reflect the population. The completed sample is 1,000 surveys. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.5 percent. Margins of error are higher in sub-groups. Those labeled evangelicals consider themselves "a born again, evangelical, or fundamentalist Christian."

Similarly, those in the Northeast (72%) and South (69%) agree more often than Westerners (58%) that human morals point to a creator who defines morality.

Northeasters (75%) and Southerners (74%) are also more likely than those in the Midwest (64%) to see the organization of the universe as evidence of creation.

"In an increasingly secular age, where the Christian faith has perhaps lost its home-field advantage, Christians will need to make their case for the creator and ultimately for the Gospel," Stetzer said. "It appears people — even non-religious people — are indeed open to apologetics arguments, if Christians will actually make them."